

New Head Start Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) System FY 2004

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INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

TO: Head Start and Early Head Start Grantees and Delegate Agencies

SUBJECT: New Head Start Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) System
FY 2004

INFORMATION:

The Head Start Bureau is pleased to announce a new training and technical assistance (T/TA) system that will assist Head Start and Early Head Start grantees in identifying T/TA needs and accessing T/TA resources. The system will be supported through contracts that have been awarded in all 10 ACF Regional Offices and the American Indian-Alaska Native and Migrant and Seasonal Workers Branches. This Information Memorandum provides information on this new T/TA system.

The new T/TA system will:

- Provide on-going, on-site support to Head Start grantees that is flexible and designed to meet individual grantee needs.
- Assist grantees in achieving full compliance with the Head Start Program Performance Standards.
- Assist grantees in developing annual T/TA plans.
- Assist grantees with deficiencies in developing and implementing Quality Improvement Plans.
- Respond to the special needs of new grantees.
- Identify a wide variety of technical assistance resources, maintain an inventory of qualified consultants and organizations, and provide lists of qualified technical assistance providers to Head Start grantees.
- Develop and maintain management information technology systems to track grantee progress and performance.
- Support the efforts of the State Collaboration Offices to increase the availability of training and technical assistance services.
- Work with other early childhood providers to assure coordinated approaches to delivering high quality services.

The Head Start Bureau's T/TA Branch will continue to provide policy direction and guidance. ACF Regional Offices will be responsible for the management of the T/TA system in their region. Grantees will manage their own T/TA resources to address T/TA needs, including, as appropriate, the hiring of expert consultants.

Staffing

The T/TA system will be supported by three groups of contracted staff:

1. **T/TA Managers (two to three per region).** These staff will provide the general day-to-day management of the region's T/TA system under the guidance of ACF staff.
2. **Content Experts in the areas of health, disabilities, early literacy, and fiscal/management/administration.** Regional Content Experts will work from the ACF regional offices. Their responsibilities in their area of expert knowledge include:
 - Providing expert guidance and direct technical assistance to grantees.
 - Carrying out national Head Start T/TA priorities as well as region-specific plans.
 - Providing support and materials that will enhance the knowledge, skills and abilities of regional federal staff and the State-based Grantee T/TA Specialists (see the discussion below regarding these positions).
 - In consultation with regional staff, identifying and documenting current and future technical assistance needs.
 - Identifying consultants and providing these names to the Regional T/TA Managers and Grantee T/TA Specialists.
 - Developing a system for accessing and maintaining resource materials, electronic and otherwise.

Early Head Start Senior Early Childhood Associates (SECAs) will continue to work from the Regional Offices in FY 2004.

3. **Grantee T/TA Specialists.** These State-based staff will report to the T/TA Managers in each Regional Office and will be assigned to work with, on average, 12-15 grantees. These staff will typically be generalists who understand T/TA strategies. Their responsibilities include:
- Identifying technical assistance resources and helping grantees access appropriate State and local resources.
 - Conducting special ACF T/TA initiatives.
 - Developing profiles of grantee training practices in areas such as literacy, child outcomes, and collaboration to allow replication of best ideas and practices.
 - Conducting assessments and surveys of grantee T/TA needs.
 - Providing assistance to grantees in developing annual T/TA plans for submission to the Regional Office.
 - Analyzing grantee training and technical assistance expenditures for effectiveness.

Each grantee will receive notification from its respective ACF Regional Office of the name of the new contractor for T/TA services and the name and contact information for its assigned Grantee T/TA Specialist.

Grantee Resources

Every grantee will work with its assigned Grantee T/TA Specialist to develop an annual T/TA plan, including the estimated costs of implementing this plan. This plan will be reviewed by the grantee's Regional Office. Each grantee will be responsible for implementing its approved T/TA plan using the special T/TA grant funds it receives and, when necessary, additional funds from its basic Head Start grant. To the extent grantees need to hire consultants, they will make the determination of which consultants to use and be responsible for paying these consultants.

Grantees with identified areas of non-compliance or with deficiencies will be provided assistance to correct these problems, but it is each grantee's responsibility to assure that all findings are corrected.

New Electronic Learning Center

In FY 2004, there will be a new Electronic Learning Center. The Center will serve as a central repository of electronic resource materials in all disciplines of early childhood development. Expert information will be readily accessible in an infrastructure that can be accessed, shared and used quickly and inexpensively twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

Head Start programs' access to electronic T/TA resources will support self-directed learning and help programs in building their own internal capacity. This will involve the increased use of distance learning opportunities and support the development of technologically-based training. The Center will help programs identify professional development opportunities and support collaboration with two and four-year institutions of higher education to assist classroom and other staff in obtaining Associate or Baccalaureate degrees.

A national consultant pool will be developed for topical areas where there are a limited numbers of experts. Each ACF region will be invited to identify resources that have proven to be useful and make this information available to the entire network. Grantees are encouraged to work with their Regional Office to identify appropriate materials.

We look forward to working with each of you as we implement this new system. Together, we can assure that T/TA will help every grantee provide consistently high quality services to all Head Start children and families.



Windy M. Hill
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Head Start Bureau